2: Adams E-4,5 (1970-1971) 1973 SR9 Carib SR9
(1932-1971) Barama River

V

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION FOR SUBSISTENCE AND EMPLOYMENT

*179 592 Although the resources for subsistence and the organization involved in exploiting them have changed, the household has remained the primary cooperative economic unit among the Upper Barama River [423] Carib population. There is no land tenure, no accumulation of capital [471] in any form, and no inheritance of any consequence. Thus, household [428] composition and the relationships among households have conformed to the immediate situations affecting the problem of subsistence.

Subsistence in the Rain Forest

175 592 For the 1932-33 period, Gillin reports that a household was composed of a man and his wife or wives and their unmarried children. [737] These children include their own and ones that have been adopted. A relative from the older generation might be absorbed as a dependent. [586] Divorce or death could dissolve a household, the remaining members [768] joining existing households or forming new households with available [585] partners. There seems to have been universal marriage for everyone of reproductive age, making the household coterminous with the family (1936:80).

175 342 Households were settled in their cultivated fields. A house structure was commonly a pole frame covered with a roof thatched from various palm leaves. Dimensions varied from six to over thirty feet

daughters under twelve years of age.

As is apparent, a man's position in a settlement was in part the result of his human capital of female relatives, sisters and daughters, and how he used these to attract men around him. However, a son-in-law was only a temporary dependent. In contrast, the associational bonds that developed between cooperating parallel kinsmen had no definite time span. There occurred varying degrees of cooperation as well as numbers of men involved, the only limit to the relocation of a household being the several months needed for a field to begin to be productive. However, in the context of the cooperation among related kinsmen, a general pattern emerges with regard to a man's life career. Except for old David, all the men in Sawari were younger than Miller, Cook, and Edwin. These three men, at about age forty, were no longer dependents as the younger men were, but were established in their own clearings. They were having different success attracting young men according to the contingencies of available female relatives as well as their personal qualities. When their energies and human capital were becoming exhausted, they again would be dependent members in a settlement, much as old David.

Such dispersed settlements, which fluctuated in size from about fifteen to fifty individuals, constituted the largest social unit (Gillin 1936:141). Within settlements, there was no differential access to local subsistence resources. Individual men who were shamans or sorcerers privately owned knowledge and magical skills, but this had little effect on their participation in the subsistence routine. A headman was recognized in each settlement (John Miller in